

NPS-09-16-09 Batch 1

USS AZ_OHC_#340_Glen Kelly_11-00-92

Transcription Date: 09/19/09 - Transcriber: JC

[BEGIN AUDIO]

[TECHNICAL]

DANIEL MARTINEZ: -- preservation, vision in the National Park Services. For the record, would you please state your full name?

GLEN KELLY: Glen Kelly.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: And your age, Glen?

GLEN KELLY: Sixty-five, be 66 November 10th, in two days.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: We're going to have a birthday party out here.

GLEN KELLY: Yeah, [SOUNDS LIKE] for brain anniversary also.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: And your present address.

GLEN KELLY: 332 Lancelot Circle NE, Concord, North Carolina 28025.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Where were you born, Glen?

GLEN KELLY: In Cabarrus County, North Carolina.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: And what was the date on that?

GLEN KELLY: November 10th, 1926.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: How many in your family, Glen?

GLEN KELLY: There are four children.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: And where did you place among them?

GLEN KELLY: I was the youngest boy. There's two boys older than I, and one girl younger than I.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: How many actually fought in World War II?

GLEN KELLY: Three of us.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: All boys.

GLEN KELLY: Mm-hmm.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Did all of them survive World War II?

GLEN KELLY: Yes.

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DANIEL MARTINEZ: And you were the only one in the Marine Corps?

GLEN KELLY: Yes.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Other two were where?

GLEN KELLY: One in the Army, one in the Navy, and I wanted to outdo them.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Where were you educated, elementary school and high school?

GLEN KELLY: At Harrisburg, North Carolina, near Concord, and I finished high school on Eastern Island through the Marine Corps Institute. It was a correspondence school, operated by I think ICS.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: When did you enlist?

GLEN KELLY: In December of 1943.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: And why did you enlist?

GLEN KELLY: I wanted to go after the Japs.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Where were you first sent for your training?

GLEN KELLY: Paris Island, South Carolina.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Why did you choose the Marine Corps?

GLEN KELLY: Well, our oldest brother was in the Army, my next brother was in the Navy, and again, I wanted a better outfit than they had.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Did that come true?

GLEN KELLY: Yes.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: What was the training like at Paris Island?

GLEN KELLY: Tough, tough.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Can you describe the toughness of it?

GLEN KELLY: No, I think [BREAK IN RECORDING] one of the things is, when you were in calisthenics doing pushups, and 72 men, we had three drill instructors. Now the first three men that quit doing pushups, they'd stand on their heads with all their

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weight, so you didn't want to be one of the first three to stop, so you kept going, kept going. And as a result of it, it made us tougher and tougher. It was good for us.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Do you remember your drill instructor, one in particular?

GLEN KELLY: McCallahan [PH].

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Can you give me a short biographical sketch of this fellah?

GLEN KELLY: Yeah. He was big, muscular, big voice, meant what he said.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Did you ever run across him once or twice?

GLEN KELLY: No. Never again.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: After Paris Island, where did you go?

GLEN KELLY: To Cherry Point, North Carolina.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: And what did you do there?

GLEN KELLY: Was in an outfit that was transit, that we were general duty type person that had several abilities. And from there, they sent us to Greenville, North Carolina, and from Greenville, North Carolina, we came to west coast, west coast right quick to Hawaii, and Hawaii over to Eastern Island.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: You were in infantry?

GLEN KELLY: It happened pretty quick. Huh?

DANIEL MARTINEZ: You were an infantry outfit?

GLEN KELLY: No, aviation. I was in dive bombing squadron 343.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: What did you do for the squadron?

GLEN KELLY: The first thing I did on Eastern Island was kill rats. And we had so many rats and we had people getting injured at night from the rats, big rats, biting them. And I was the rat detail. You can see around here now, there still have traps to try to kill them.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: We already got you to Midway. Let's backtrack a little. How did you come to Midway? Did you come by ship?

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GLEN KELLY: We came by train from Greenville to San Diego. We came by aircraft carrier to Hawaii. From there to here was by transport planes.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: By transport planes?

GLEN KELLY: Mm-hmm.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: What was your first glimpse of Midway? Was it from the transport plane or--?

GLEN KELLY: Oh yeah.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: What did you think of this place?

GLEN KELLY: Oh god, it was bright, just the brightest thing I'd ever seen, and it showed up. The pilot let us see out through the front windshield and you could see in the daytime, just a big bright reflection from it.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: From the white sand?

GLEN KELLY: Coral. Now Eastern Island is much brighter than Sand Island, and it's coral instead of sand over there. There was.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: So elements of your squadron landed over there and what were your duties over there, besides rat killer?

GLEN KELLY: Guard duty, some mess duty, and maintenance, carpenter maintenance and anything like that. It was general purpose handyman.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Were you aware of the historic battle that had taken place out here?

GLEN KELLY: Yes.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: What did that mean to you?

GLEN KELLY: It was great. It gave us a lot of pride in what had happened here. But most of us wanted to go on further. We were not satisfied to stay here. We liked Midway and all, but we wanted to go further.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Japan.

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GLEN KELLY: Yes. Our orders had come about and we were to go back to Hawaii and get on a carrier and set offshore of Japan and constantly bomb them, until they gave up that way. That was one of the plans they had for the war for us.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: How much time did you spend here at Midway?

GLEN KELLY: I think 13 months.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: What did you do for the squadron? How many planes were here?

GLEN KELLY: On Eastern, we had 28 airplanes and that was the dive bombers. On this island was Corsair fighter planes and we had about the same number over here in Corsair.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: What kind of dive bombers were they, SBDs?

GLEN KELLY: SBDs and SB2Cs. That was same as Army A24 and Army A25, very effective airplanes.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: What job did you do on the airplanes?

GLEN KELLY: Very little on the airplane itself. Very little. At times, all of us had to do different jobs in around.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: What job did you do most of the time?

GLEN KELLY: Pull chucks, you know. No maintenance. I was not an airplane mechanic and didn't try it. I did fly some in a radio gunner, cockpit of it.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: You like flying?

GLEN KELLY: Yes, sure do.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Did you keep your hand in aviation still?

GLEN KELLY: Yes.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: In what way?

GLEN KELLY: Private pilot, and fly as a private pilot.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: I want you to go into some detail, this problem with rats. How did you turn into Midway's number one rat killer?

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GLEN KELLY: We had a Dr. Hawkes [PH] and one morning he pointed at me and motioned for me to come to him. I went over and he said, "I need you." "Yes, sir," I said. "We got guys in here been bitten bad by rats during the night, and we need to kill them." So we took good cornmeal and mixed powdered molasses with it, and we'd feed the rats for four, five days. Then he would put some kind of white poisoning in it. And then on about the fifth day, we'd put the poison to them, and that afternoon, you could see them running to the ocean and everywhere else. But we were told they got their water by going down through the rat holes and deep, and they were hard to find all of them at once, but we got it down to where we couldn't see a rat anywhere. And then two, three, four weeks later, they'd come again.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Do you have one of your funnier rat stories?

GLEN KELLY: No.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Anything humorous ever happen to you while doing this rat patrol, so to speak?

GLEN KELLY: No. A lot of the guys kidded me about it, but thanked me for it.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Did they ever give you a nickname?

GLEN KELLY: No, other than Rat Killer.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: How about the gooney birds, how did you interact with them?

GLEN KELLY: Well, I didn't know what a gooney bird was when I left to come out here from Hawaii, and I'd had a lot of pictures painted about something that looked almost human, it would dance with you and all this kind of stuff. Didn't know, and they'd tell me about falling in love with the gooney birds and all like that. It was quite different from that. Not long after we got here, sometime after we got here, they started coming in, those and the bosun birds and the sooty terns and all those.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: What did you think of these gooney birds, once you got to see them face to face?

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GLEN KELLY: They're quite different from what I thought they might be. The young ones are really the gooney birds, the young trying to fly. They'll get up in the air, ten, 15 feet off the ground and forget they're in the air and fold up their wings, and just quit flying. And down they come. But of course, with the gooney birds, we had to shoo them off the runways every time we had flights coming in and out, and that's the only way. If we didn't, the planes would just chop them up, and sometimes they would cause damage to an airplane by getting in their cooling system. An air cooled airplane with a gooney bird in it just heats up in a hurry, and that plane would have to go around and come back in and clean it out again.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: The war was pretty much out there. How did you pass the boredom out here? What kind of things did you do to help pass the time?

GLEN KELLY: Well, we had games we played. We had softball, baseball, a lot of things like that, movies. Of course, there was always poker and other card games, pinochle.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: You played a little poker while you were out here?

GLEN KELLY: Yeah.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: What was your favorite game?

GLEN KELLY: Twenty-one or what's the other-- blackjack.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Were you a winner?

GLEN KELLY: Not much. Never much of a winner. We had the guys from up north and other places that were a lot more experienced with it than I was. A lot of times, I'd set back and watch them and try to learn from them.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Crap games out here too?

GLEN KELLY: Yes, but not as much as card games.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: How about for recreation besides that? Swimming popular?

GLEN KELLY: Oh yeah, swimming, spear fishing and all that, sure. Beautiful fish.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: How was the chow out here?

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GLEN KELLY: Good, real good. It would sometimes get a little buggy, sometimes get a little short, but we always had beer. And at one time, we had beer when we had just a very little bit of other food.

Q: Tell Daniel about the raisin bread for me.

GLEN KELLY: That was a bread that was made in a hurry. I never did really see much of it, but it was not raisins, it was bugs in the bread.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Bugs in the bread? How did the bugs get in the bread?

GLEN KELLY: I never was in that part of the mess hall or bakery

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Was this the cooks having a sense of humor?

GLEN KELLY: No. Just happened that way. We caught ourselves using the best, good cornmeal to feed the rats and yet what they made cornbread and all from in the mess hall did have bugs in it. They didn't have time to pick the bugs, you know. You had to do that when you ate.

Q: Did you have all the beer you wanted?

GLEN KELLY: Yes. I was young and just two beers was all I could drink then. And I've met some of the guys that used to drink me under the table, and I can drink them under the table now.

Q: How did you get your beer?

GLEN KELLY: We had coupons and they'd only give you so many a day or a month or a week. They'd try to limit it that way, but there was always those guys that didn't drink that would sell those beer coupons, or beer chips, they called them. Two a day was what the ration was.

Q: Was that a type of currency out here, your beer chips?

GLEN KELLY: Yes, yes. You could trade it for money or anything else, and that happened, yeah, quite a bit.

[TECHNICAL]

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GLEN KELLY: But I've met some of the guys that I used to drink with since then, and I can really out drink them now.

[TECHNICAL]

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Tell me about the raisin bread.

GLEN KELLY: All right, the raisin bread was bread that you could hold up, so you looked like raisins in it. It wasn't. It was not actually raisins, but it was bugs. Cooks, bakers, didn't have time to get them out there. We had to when we ate it, and that's what was called raisin bread out here. The chicken was chopped up so hurriedly that it was called seagull.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: It was called seagull?

GLEN KELLY: Seagull.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Why's that?

GLEN KELLY: It just was not cut like we'd been accustomed to eating chicken. You know how a cut up chicken is? It was cut with a meat cleaver and just whacked any kind of way.

Q: How do you feel about raisin bread today?

GLEN KELLY: Oh, well I have looked and thought the same thing.

Q: What was the same thing you thought?

GLEN KELLY: Bugs. And I don't eat raisin bread today, I don't.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Is the building that you stayed in still here?

GLEN KELLY: No. They widened the runway and took the building, took our hangar and all, and that's over here on this runway that points toward Eastern Island. That's after we moved over to Sand Island, and I'm not sure about the buildings on Eastern, but I wouldn't think they would be there.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: When you were here on Midway, did you have a sense of security, and it was safe?

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GLEN KELLY: No. Never, ever thought we were totally safe. All of us, you know, at times when we would be near the water, we'd scan our eyes out to the sea, and help look, and help be one of the lookouts. And all of us did that. If an airplane came close, we were quick to identify it, and quick to be sure it was not one of their planes, but one of ours. And we didn't know, but what we were not vulnerable for attack at all those times, you know. It was just one of those things that you just knew could happen, and we were ready for them.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: When you left Midway, where did you go?

GLEN KELLY: To Hawaii. And there we were going to get on a carrier to go to Japan to set off shore and bomb them. But the war, the first atomic bomb was dropped our last day here, and then the next one was dropped while we were onboard a ship, going to Hawaii. And then by the time we got to Hawaii shortly after, the war ended.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: How did you feel when the war ended?

GLEN KELLY: Oh, great, oh lord, yeah.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: How did you celebrate?

GLEN KELLY: I was on Eva [PH] Air Station and they took us out to the beach and gave us all a case of beer. Every one of us had a case of beer. At those times, to insulate that beer, it was in sawdust and so the case was much, much larger than a case of beer is today. They had the hula girls out there for us. And the next day, I was transferred to Barber's Point, to the Navy base. The first thing they had us do was go back out and celebrate again. So I had two good days of celebration, and it was a great relief that the war was over and we could go home.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Talking about celebrations and entertainment, what kind of entertainment did you experience here on Midway?

GLEN KELLY: The greatest thing we had was Betty Hutton, and a lot of us would like to know about Betty Hutton today and know where she might be and thank her again

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for it. And we had Boris Karloff and I forgot the actor's name that was with him. And "Arsenic and Old Lace," and that's the entertainment. Then we had a talent show comprised of Marines, and some sailors. In that was Ed McMahon and Johnny Carson, and that thing originated here. I 'm not sure if Ed McMahon joined it here or at Hawaii, but one of the two places, and then it came back again, after it had rebuilt itself, and they came back for the second time here. And that time, Ed McMahon was the emcee, and Johnny Carson was with him too. A lot of these guys you see around, picking their guitars and singing and all like that, had a lot of talent. So that helped. Those guys give those guys something to do, and us some good entertainment.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Where did these shows take place, here or on Sand Island, or Eastern Island or where?

GLEN KELLY: Well, Boris Karloff was on over here, but Betty Hutton came over to Eastern Island, and because of bad weather, stayed an extra day over there with us. So we ate with her and she was with us in the mess hall to eat and all that, and we felt very close to her, and she was so good.

Q: Do you remember any of the songs she sang?

GLEN KELLY: Pardon?

Q: Do you remember any of the songs she sang?

GLEN KELLY: "Dance with a Dolly" and "With a Hole in Her Stocking."

Q: Do you remember any of it? Can you sing any of it?

GLEN KELLY: No, I sure can't sing. I can't carry--

Q: Remember how you were doing it this morning? You can't do--

GLEN KELLY: No, I couldn't do that.

Q: I heard from some of the guys that they felt really neglected out here, and it really changed them and how they felt deep inside. How did that work for you, in making you feel a part of that civilization?

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GLEN KELLY: Well, we did feel some neglected, because we were a good, well trained outfit. We had the best pilots and dive bombing target practice and all in the entire corps. We did feel like we should have gone on further, you know. We knew we could do it, and we did feel neglected for that, sure we did. It just didn't come about. A general came out and found out about it, and he came out and spoke to us, and he says, "I'll see if I can't end that." But by the time he got here, it was a little late, and that's what we were going to do to Japan. We were going to knock their socks off, going after.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: There was a radio station here.

GLEN KELLY: Yes.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Did you listen to that radio station?

GLEN KELLY: Yes, KMTH.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: What did it play?

GLEN KELLY: All music and all the popular tunes and all that, the latest tunes.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: That helped morale a little, didn't it?

GLEN KELLY: Yes, yes. One thing about that station, it had no commercials, none. If we could catch a State-side station on our radios at night, we'd listen to the commercials as much as we did the music.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Why's that?

GLEN KELLY: Because it was just-- I don't know, blank. The radio station was just blank with no commercials on it. You don't realize it until you listen to a station like that for a couple, three or four months or more.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Was a commercial a piece of home?

GLEN KELLY: Well, yes. The ones that we listened to that were State-side stations, yeah. And they'd be advertising Coke and various things like that on that station, that we never heard here. It kind of let you know what's going on, what sells and all

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like that too, commercials do. We didn't have it here. We had good music, good stations.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: You also had Tokyo Rose.

GLEN KELLY: Yes.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Tell me about her.

[TECHNICAL]

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Glen who was Tokyo Rose?

GLEN KELLY: Tokyo Rose was a lady that had a broadcasting station set up to broadcast that we liked to us. She was always interesting, and she gave us some of the news that we didn't get anywhere else.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Where did that news originate from?

GLEN KELLY: I'm not sure when it originated.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Where was she broadcasting from?

GLEN KELLY: I believe Japan, or some of the islands in Japan, and I think she probably moved around some, and people liked her music. She had some music that the guys liked a little better than our stations played, and she always had a message for us. And she always had something to say about Midway Island, and you can expect for submarines even to attack you at any moment, and things like that. And she kept you on edge, but I think it made us more alert.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: What were some of the other messages she sent?

GLEN KELLY: She'd call a guy's name that she had found out was on Midway, and that his brother was in Germany, and he had just been killed and all like this, and it was all sad messages, that she tried to disrupt our morale with.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: A little psychological warfare?

GLEN KELLY: Yes, that's what it was. She tried, but we laughed at her, went on and we made the best out of it.

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DANIEL MARTINEZ: What about the guys that had girlfriends and wives at home?

Would she ever make any comments?

GLEN KELLY: Oh, she sure did.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Can you describe one of those?

GLEN KELLY: Yes. She'd call a man's name and say, "Your girlfriend, Mary Jane, or whatever, has been dating your best friend at home," and that sort of thing. She did have that kind of messages all the time. Thank you for helping me remember it.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: I understand that you had a birthday out here. Can you tell me about your birthday?

GLEN KELLY: Yes, I was November 10th, and that's Marine Corps anniversary day and it was on Eastern Island. And during that time, I was the only one that had a birthday that day on this base or any other Marine base I was on. The commanding officer would come in and wish me a happy birthday and serve me morning and noon and evening chow. I was the honored Marine that day on the Marine base, whether it be here or back State-side.

Q: Was that everybody's birthday, or just yours because it was the Marines' birthday too?

GLEN KELLY: Pardon?

Q: Did they do that on everyone's birthday, or just yours, because you're special?

GLEN KELLY: Well, we celebrated the Marine Corps anniversary, every November 10th, never fail. And we had a carnival type affair, going along with our regular duties and all that, set up for anything that could come up with little games, hit the target and things like throwing a ball at the milk bottles. Anything we could use, what we had available to make a little carnival or fair with it. And that's the Marine Corps anniversary, it's still a pretty heavy celebrated thing around any Marine base.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Do you have a picture of that?

GLEN KELLY: I have one small picture. Did I give it to you?

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Q: Yes. Can you describe that picture?

GLEN KELLY: It shows a target, and you're able to throw balls and hit through the bulls eye. You got the target through the bulls eye, you were the winner. They didn't have anything to give you if you won, but that's what it was. Maybe a pack of cigarettes, but of course, cigarettes were only a nickel a pack then, but it was something. It was not just going. Then we had to hit the thing and dump one of the officers. You know how you're at a carnival or fair or something, you throw a ball and hit the target and it dunks the-- so we had that, and we enjoyed that too. We had a good time. Sixth defense battalion did a lot working on that. Of course, we worked very close with all the guys in 6th defense battalion and were close to them, and knew we were all a team. We all had our own duties and things to perform and all like that.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Were there any aviation accidents while you were out here?

GLEN KELLY: Yes.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Can you describe some of those?

GLEN KELLY: The day our planes flew in from Hawaii, one of our planes in the Navy ran together in the flight pattern and that killed four men. That was just off three. We had a plane that quite often had hydraulic trouble and we lost a plane that was on patrol that way. There was a Corsair, one of the Corsair pilots went through this hangar out here, just straight down. Nobody knew what caused it.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Back that up again. What exactly happened now?

GLEN KELLY: A Corsair, and F4U plane, somehow from a pretty high altitude, came down just screaming, just down in a straight down dive. And in that straight down dive, he went straight into the center of that hangar.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Where was this hangar located at?

GLEN KELLY: That's this hangar that's over here now. And I believe it to be the same hangar.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Besides the pilot, was anybody hurt or killed?

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GLEN KELLY: No. He was the only one. I heard some people have told me that they happened to be close the hangar, but it just happened at lunchtime when everybody had got out and they were on their way to lunch. Just a freak thing. Didn't hurt a lot of things that were in the hangar. Hurt another airplane slightly, but that's about all. But equipment then was not what it is today. You couldn't depend on an airplane being as efficient as it is. And our planes, we'd flown them about two times as many hours as they should have had on, before major overhauls or anything like that. That was part of it. We had planes with emergency landings and all like that because we didn't have the [INDISCERNIBLE] what was should have had.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: The Marine Corps had a lot of celebrities in it that had enlisted and I believe you told me a story about a mess hall in Hawaii and the kind of individuals that were in there, and some of the people you saw. You want to relate that story to me?

GLEN KELLY: Yes, it was 24, I believe was the number of the celebrities that ate in this mess hall, and among those was Ted Williams and Tyrone Power, Bob Crosby and Pappy Boyington. And as everybody talked in a mess hall like that, between Pappy Boyington would open the door to come into that mess hall, a hush would come over the entire people. Everybody in there would just momentarily hush and stop. They had that much respect for that man. Ted Williams, Tyrone Power and those guys were just ordinary people, just like you guys are right here, and they were well liked. But that guy, when he came in, he just drew all manners of respect. He was a pilot. He was a pilot flying by the seat of his pants. He knew things. He originated different maneuvers and all, and that's why he got as many planes as he did.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Do you think he typified the best of the Marine Corps aviation?

GLEN KELLY: Yes, one of them. Some of the best of it. We had other pilots that had about that number, but he certainly was number one. Certainly number one.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Anything else?

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Q: When you speak of him, he seems to personify a certain spirit.

GLEN KELLY: Yes, yeah. Try to do it different.

Q: Tell me how you feel about that. What was so special [INDISCERNIBLE].

GLEN KELLY: I'm sure, you know, every time I think about him, it causes a little choked up type feeling, you know, and we appreciated the man that much. I think it's beginning to show on me, isn't it? I can't help it.

Q: What is it that you appreciated about him?

GLEN KELLY: His ability.

Q: Just elaborate on that.

GLEN KELLY: He could fly an airplane in a way that no one else could. Now one thing, he had been flying a good number of years ahead of that, you know, in the '30s even, and he'd been in the Flying Tigers in China when America was fighting against Japan in China. So he had [INDISCERNIBLE] a lot of pilots. We had a lot of pilots that had 100 hours to begin with and they were still [BREAK IN RECORDING] we came here. And he was just-- well, I'm sure like Michelangelo was a great artist, he was a great artist in an airplane, and that's what we thought about the man.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Did you ever see him fly personally?

GLEN KELLY: No, I didn't. And I'm sorry I didn't. But the time that his flying really showed up was when he was against an enemy. The Black Sheep squadron didn't show it as it was, but somewhat close to it. It was a Hollywood version of what he was, and we didn't have the women on the islands that they showed on that program, and various things like that.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Did you wish you had?

GLEN KELLY: Yes, yes.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Glen, why did you come back to Midway?

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GLEN KELLY: It means a lot to me, you know. I had an opportunity and I would have liked to have come, had this not been available, I would have paid my way or anything to come, just to get to see it again and old memories, you know.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: What's that word Midway mean to you?

GLEN KELLY: Don't know exactly how to say it, but a good portion of my life. It's where I met with the guys from Brooklyn and Paris Island, and we were weaving together closer here, a bunch of us from the country that didn't hardly know what those guys from Brooklyn were talking about. By the time we got here, we were closer together, and we wove together as a group, more so here than we had beforehand. We were to help each other, and that was semper fidelis for all of us.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Would it be safe to say that you understood what it meant to be an American?

GLEN KELLY: Yes, oh yes.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: What does the word America mean to you?

GLEN KELLY: The greatest country in the world. I can't help but choke up on it, and I hate to see people kick it around, you know, as has been done. Let me tell you about something else.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Are you glad you came back?

GLEN KELLY: Yes, yes.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Have you made new friends?

GLEN KELLY: Yes. Most of these guys, the veterans and all, I've known over the past, and then I was responsible for getting this squadron here, 343, back together again, and we have our own reunion now too. We'll meet in Akron, Ohio next July. Then the 6th defense battalion will meet in Mississippi in June, the anniversary of this Midway.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: Would you like to come back to Midway?

GLEN KELLY: After this?

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DANIEL MARTINEZ: Mm-hmm.

GLEN KELLY: Not really after this, but I'm enjoying this great deal. I want to get over to Eastern Island, because most of the time I spent over here was over there. This is a metropolis as compared to what we had over there and the size of it and all.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: A young school child, high school kid, his history class, is sitting down and reading his book and he runs across the Battle of Midway. What would you want him or her to remember about that battle?

GLEN KELLY: The greatest battle of all. The battle that turned the war around. The battle that was led by our great leader, Admiral Nimitz, with lesser equipment, not as prepared and all like that. Admiral Nimitz, I'm sure, was the biggest part of this battle, and his planning and all that, is the thing that I think should be remembered about this more than anything.

DANIEL MARTINEZ: We've asked a lot of veterans about their visit here, and most of them termed it, or began to term it, as a crossroads of their life. Was it a crossroads for you?

GLEN KELLY: Yes, it was. It was definitely that. I'd gone from a 17 year old kid to an adult, I think right here. And I believe it happened here. By the time I went back, I was ready for the profession I joined after that, was a plumbing contractor. Took that on, and so much of it I remembered from here. And as I'd lay at night here with nothing to do, or at times when I didn't have anything to do, I was planning my plumbing business and what I'd do when I get back there.

Q: I'd like you to just point to your hat for me, just like you did [INDISCERNIBLE].

GLEN KELLY: Up here?

Q: And take your hand down now and just give it a little point.

GLEN KELLY: Like that?

Q: Yeah, and then take your hand down, and we're just going to do this and down. [INDISCERNIBLE]. That's what we call an insert shot.

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GLEN KELLY: Yeah, take that, put it on back in there.

Q: Could you repeat semper fidelis and tell me what that means?

GLEN KELLY: Oh, it's the greatest words there is. And semper fidelis is always faithful. It's the Marine Corps motto and it's what we lived by. It's one thing that gives Marines pride over other branches of service.

Q: [INDISCERNIBLE].

GLEN KELLY: Always faithful to your country, and each other, you know. And I don't meant to be getting choked up so, but it does. And all of us, all these guys, all the other guys, you sometimes find people, Marines, and we're not ex-Marines, we're former Marines. And you don't see it with a guy, he was just in the Army. "Where were you?" "I was just in the Army," or "I was in the Navy." The Navy guys do have a little more pride than Army, I think, but you've never seen a Marine that was not proud of it, I don't believe, do you? I don't.

Q: I haven't.

GLEN KELLY: No.

Q: Semper fidelis.

GLEN KELLY: Semper fidelis. Two great words.

[TECHNICAL]

[END AUDIO]